

America's Tank Division



IRONSIDE

March - April 2005

1-37 ARMOR
BANDITS ON THE LOOSE IN GERMANY

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1st Armored Division

In Action Series

PHOTOS BY: Christopher Blum

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MARCH - APRIL 2005

1/1 Cavalry

1st Armored Division

IRONSIDE

Magazine

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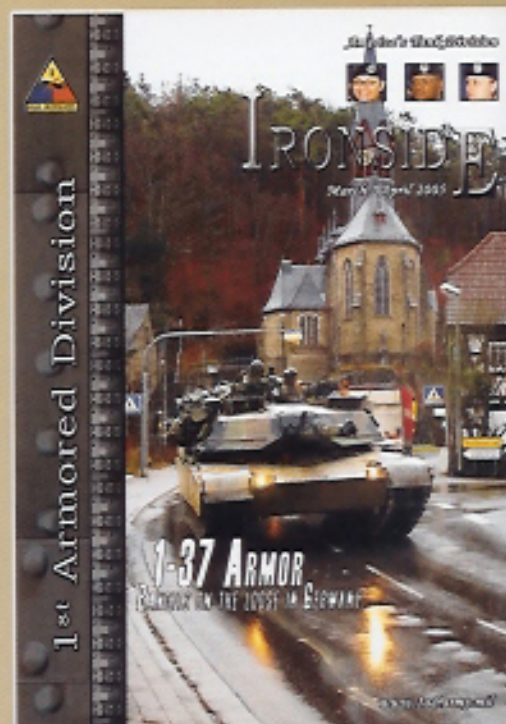
Volume 2
Issue 2




In this issue . . .

- Page 4 Division Commander Speaks
- Page 5 A message from the 4th Brigade Commander
- Page 6 President George W. Bush visits Wiesbaden
- Page 9 Troops enjoy president's visit
- Page 10 Laura Bush talks about education
- Page 12 Baumholder troops upgrade training
- Page 18 Sling load training in Dexheim
- Page 20 1/1 CAV Gunnery
- Page 25 Master Gunners and what they do
- Page 26 Gunnery is for every Soldier
- Page 29 Support Soldiers in action
- Page 33 MWR Half Marathon
- Page 35 Tankin' outside "the box"

COVER PHOTO



The Bandits of 1-37 Armor rattle and clank through the tiny twisty turns of the small town of Schmitten, Germany. See page 34 for the story. Photo by Sgt. Gregory F. Withrow.

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Maj. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey

Division Commander Speaks

I left Iraq last year with a great deal of pride at the dedication, professional excellence, and perseverance of the Iron Soldiers. As I've watched you this year — especially now that we are deeply engaged in our retraining program — I am even more proud of you.

The mark of an exceptional unit is its ability to do more than one thing at a time and to do it all well. By that measure, Old Ironsides is an exceptional unit.

As I pen this article, Iron Soldiers are fighting the OPFOR at CMTC, shooting gunnery at Grafenwohr, participating in a Corps Command Post Exercise, standing ready as the USAREUR Immediate Ready Force mission, preparing to take on a NATO Support Mission in Iraq, preparing for a partnership event with Russian Military Forces, deploying to Korea as part of Exercise Foal Eagle, and continuing to reconstitute. We can do all of those things because we are blessed with officer and noncommissioned officer

leaders who know what "right" looks like, with Soldiers who are eager to learn and to improve, and with families who support them in this crucial work for the nation.

Even the President of the United States recognizes the extraordinary contributions of this Division to the cause of freedom.

I think about it this way—anyone can serve their country when it is not threatened and when events unfold predictably, but you are standing tall for America as it is threatened and in the face of uncertainty. I hope it's clear to you that you and your families are making history. Thank for your service.

Continue mission. Train hard and take care of each other.

Iron Soldiers!

Martin E. Dempsey
MG, US Army
Iron 6

A message from the 4th Brigade Commander

Iron Eagle!!!

It is truly a pleasure to have this opportunity to update the Iron Soldiers of America's Tank Division about the endeavors of the Iron Eagle Brigade Combat Team (IEBCT).

During the past month and for the foreseeable future, the Iron Eagle Brigade Combat Team has and will continue to press the fight on three fronts: reconstituting, retraining and transforming. These varied missions force the IEBCT Soldiers to fight along three distinct paths that all lead to the same end state: a combat ready force that is prepared to go anywhere anytime and fight and win.

Our remaining reconstitution fight is centered on the Aviation Aircraft Reset Program. It is a program designed to conduct intense aircraft phase maintenance inspections and repairs on every aircraft in the IEBCT that returned from Iraq.

The Division Support Command's mighty 127th Aviation Support Battalion is managing our program. The work force includes civilian contractors and Soldiers from 127th ASB; 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment; and, 2nd Battalion, 501st General Support Aviation Battalion.

Their work will be mission complete by the end of the 4th quarter Fiscal Year 2005.

Several units are in the middle of the retraining fight. 1-1CAV just completed an outstanding gunnery rotation at the Grafenwohr Training Area. They qualified 28 crews through Tank Table VIII, six platoons on Tank Table XII, 40 crews through Bradley Table

VIII, 12 sections on Cavalry Table X, and three Mortar Sections.

Each cavalry troop also conducted Combat Maneuver Training Center live fire exercises and the squadron completed several small arms ranges and other Iron Warrior Training required events.

It was a hugely successful month at GTA. The CAV is participating in the V Corps exercise "Victory Focus" and will deploy elements of the squadron to Korea for Exercise "Foal Eagle" in the near future.

The "Iron Knight" Soldiers of 2-501st are currently deployed and fighting as Aviation Task Force (TF) supporting the 2nd Brigade Combat Team's CMTC rotation. The TF includes an UH-60 Lift Company, an AH-64D cavalry troop from 6th Squadron, 6th Cavalry Regiment out of Illesheim, Germany and a support slice from the 127th ASB.

The rotation is a great training opportunity to continue to accomplish aviation-specific training and Iron Warrior Training. This rotation is one of three 2-501st will support between now and mid-June. They will also conduct a gunnery rotation at GTA in late April.

The Iron Eagle Brigade Combat Team is focused on completing reconstitution and retraining for the next fight. However, we are also leading the way for transformation fight.

Currently, the 1st Battalion, 501st Attack Helicopter Regiment is deployed to Fort Hood, Texas for AH-64D Longbow Unit Fielding and Training Program. The battalion will convert



Col. Wyford A. Harris

from an AH-64A model unit to an AH-64D model unit that will bring unmatched lethality to the division.

The Air Cavalry Troops (D, E and F) of 1-1 CAV and the 69th Chemical Company received orders to deactivate by Jun 15 and are currently in the midst of making it happen.

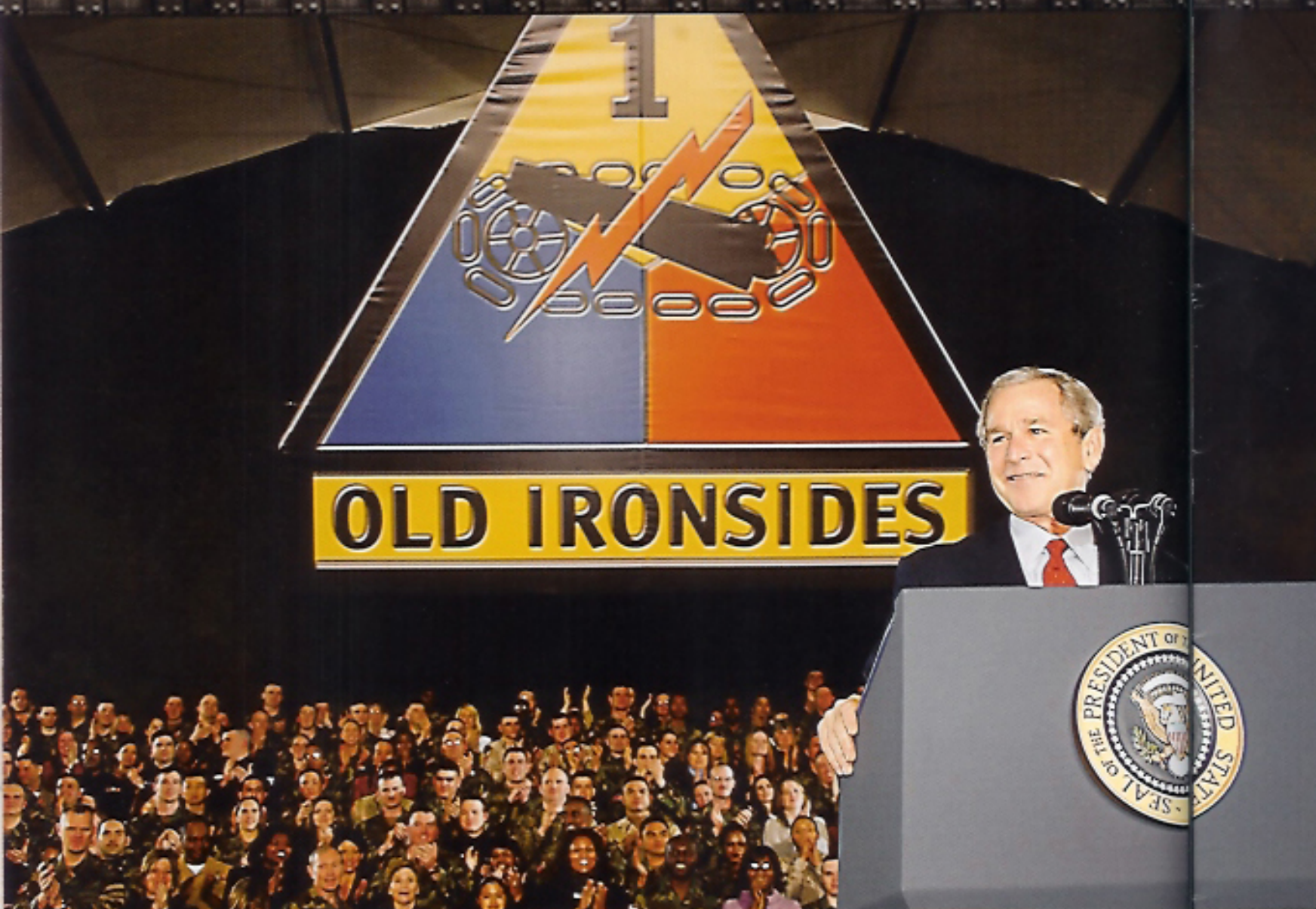
On Feb. 11, we welcomed two new battalions in the Iron Eagle Brigade Combat Team: 5th Battalion, 158th GSAB and 3rd Battalion 58th Air Traffic Services (ATS). Both battalions are headquartered out of Giebelstadt, Germany and are "stay behind" units from the 12th Aviation Brigade (Avn Bde). They are permanently attached to IEBCT as part of our future transformation. The 5-158th GSAB has units in Germany and Italy. The 3-58th ATS BN is responsible for all Army airfields in Germany and has oversight for air traffic control operations in Kosovo.

We welcome them both to the team.

As you can tell, the Iron Eagle Brigade Combat Team is busy. However, with the effort of our great Soldiers and the support of the great Iron Land Soldiers no mission will go undone.

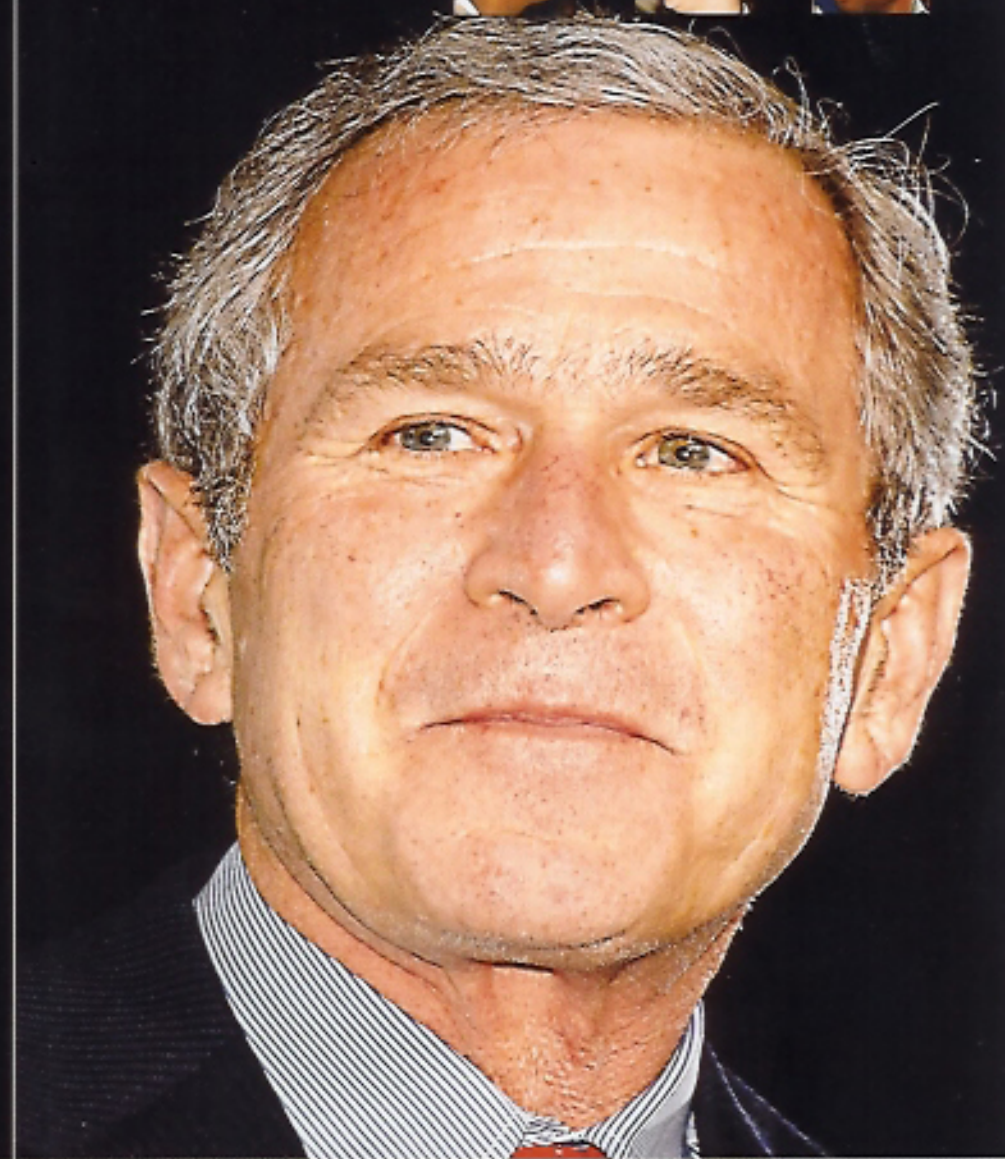
May God bless us all.

Iron Eagle!!!
Iron Soldiers!!!



*"I know you've just
gotten back from
Iraq. I'm pleased
to say,
job well done."*

*President
George W. Bush*



COMMANDER IN CHIEF

Photos by Sgt. Gregory F. Withrow

Story by Master Sgt. David Melancon

VISITS TROOPS IN GERMANY

"Today I bring you a message from back home: The American people are grateful to you; your communities are proud of you. And as you defend the cause of freedom, America stands with you," said President of the United States George W. Bush to about 3,000 service members and military families in

Wiesbaden, Germany, Feb. 23.

The commander in chief told the Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen and their families that their country supports them as they serve on the front lines of the global war on terrorism.

Bush's stop at the Airfield was part of a three-day series of meeting with

NATO officials and European leaders. Before arriving on the airfield, the president met with German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder in Mainz.

"I arrived this morning from Brussels, where I was meeting with some of our vital allies in the war on terror," Bush said. "I came to

Wiesbaden to meet you, the men and women fighting on the front lines of that war. You are carrying out challenging duties with skill and honor."

Bush also praised family members for their service and sacrifice.

"Your president is here to tell you that I am proud of the military families

as well," he said.

The 1st Armored Division and 1st Infantry Division have played important roles in the defense of freedom through history, the president said. The divisions were on the front lines during World War II, the Cold War, Vietnam and Operations Desert Shield and Storm.

"The 1st Armored and 1st Infantry Divisions are two of the oldest, proudest units in the United States Army," he said. "And on this day 14 years ago, soldiers in both your divisions spent their final night in Saudi Arabia, before charging into Iraq to crush the army of Saddam Hussein."

... Continued next page ...



When called, the 1st Armored Division, "moved into Iraq in April of 2003, and you stayed for 15 months. You waged an innovative, disciplined campaign, and because of your skill and sacrifice, Iraq is sovereign and Iraq is free," he said.

The Iraqi people struggled under a regime that crippled the country and oppressed its citizens, Bush said. Soldiers of the Old Ironsides Division re-

plish their missions even when the division's return home was postponed by three months. Soldiers took on and defeated insurgent militias in Karbala, Najaf, Al Kut and Diwaniyah.

Those battles helped pave the way toward Iraq's sovereignty, he said.

Soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division carried on with the work begun by the 1st Armored Division, Bush said.

"From Kirkuk to Samarra to Tikrit, the soldiers of the 1st Infantry Division worked around the clock to prepare Iraq for free elections," he said. "More than 8 million Iraqi voters defied the terrorists by lining up at the polls, dipping their fingers in ink, and casting the first free vote of their lives."

"Job well done," Bush said. "By helping the people of that country turn back the enemies of democracy, you have acted in the great liberating tradition of our nation. Together, the 1st Infantry Division and the 1st Armored Division have helped to bring freedom and hope to a suffering people."

The president also cited the courage, determination and skills of the 3rd Corps Support Command and the 421st MEDEVAC Company, known as "Dustoff Europe."

He also remembered service members who gave their lives and who suffered wounds while defending freedom and liberating people of other nations.

"Some in your units have survived terrible injuries, and a grateful America will do everything we can to help them recover," the president pledged. "Some of you have said farewell to some fine Americans. They represent a new generation of heroes, as great as any who have come before. Their example of unselfish courage inspires all who serve."

"And America will honor their names forever."

Soldiers and their families have made contributions to the country and the world that last for many years, he said. By taking the fight to the enemy, service members are ensuring that the war on terrorism does not spread to the United States. It is also helping to reshape the Middle East.

"By helping captive peoples gain



President George W. Bush and first lady Laura Bush greet Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen and military family members of the U.S. European Command during a visit to Wiesbaden Army Airfield Feb. 23.

their freedom, you have made a critical contribution to the history of liberty," Bush said. "And that means the world will be more peaceful, and our children and grandchildren will be more secure. With your courage, with your determination, and with your skill, the cause of freedom will prevail, and we'll achieve the peace that we all want for future generations to come."

Editor's Note: This event was the second visit by President George W. Bush to 1st Armored Division troops during the Global War on Terrorism. The first time was in Baghdad during Thanksgiving 2003.

Troops enjoy president's visit

Story by Cassandra Kardeke

Photos by Sgt. Gregory F. Withrow

"I know you've just gotten back from Iraq. I'm pleased to say, job well done," words worth waiting to hear when spoken by the President of the United States, George W. Bush.

Following a visit with German Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, the president and first lady, Laura Bush, paid a visit to the airfield to meet, "the men and women fighting on the front lines of the war on terrorism."

"Laura and I were in the neighborhood and just thought we'd say hi," said Bush to a cheering crowd. "Howdy."

Followed by a loud "hooah" and a lot of cheering, Bush reminded many of the troops that this really wasn't the first time they received a personal appearance.

"It's good to be at the proud home

of the 1st Armored Division. Some of you Iron Soldiers might have seen me before. I was the guy serving turkey," said Bush referring to a surprise visit to Old Ironsides Division Soldiers for Thanksgiving Dinner in 2003 at the division headquarters at the Baghdad International Airport.

Bush thanked military families for their dedication, sacrifices and support.

"This was definitely worth the wait," said 1st Sgt. Mark Bell, 141st Signal Battalion, one of many who waited for a couple of hours in a tent the size of a football field.

But the wait wasn't so bad. Spectators rocked to the sounds of headline entertainers, Diana DeGarmo, runner up in last year's "American Idol" television talent contest, and the Gatlin Brothers.

Wearing a camouflage jacket and jeans, DeGarmo included the crowd in her performance and got everyone clapping and singing along to her rendition of "Old Time Rock and Roll."

"No matter what you have heard, everybody back in the States supports you. You are the heartbeat and soul of what keeps our country going," DeGarmo said.

DeGarmo ended her performance with a standing crowd singing along to "America the Beautiful" and was followed with toe-tapping music by the Gatlin Brothers, a country western band from Texas. Living only streets away, the Gatlin Brothers first performed for former President George H. Bush back in 1958 as children and became close friends with the Bush family.

"We're old friends of the president, so when we were asked to perform before him we were delighted. And it fit right into our schedule," said lead-singer, Larry Gatlin.

"I've never seen or even heard of them [Gatlin Brothers] until now, but they certainly stole the show," said a newly-acquainted fan, Sgt. Artisha Gilliam, 3rd Battalion, 58th Aviation Regiment based in Giebelstadt.

Towards the end of their performance, howitzer blasts shook the tent, signaling the arrival of the man every one was waiting to see. But before he entered, the crowd roared as Master Sgt. Chantel Sena-Diaz, senior chaplain's assistant NCOIC for 1st Armored Division, introduced Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, who addressed the troops prior to Bush.

"It was such an emotional speech and inspiring to all the Soldiers," said Spc. Eric Miranda, Headquarters and Headquarters Det., 221st Base Support Battalion, of Rice's statement, "Because of each of you this is the greatest military in the world's history."



Spouses and Soldiers from throughout the European Command greeted and shook hands with President George W. Bush after his address to the assembly at Wiesbaden Army Airfield.





First Lady encourages education

Laura Bush talks with Wiesbaden students

Story and photo by Pfc. Jennifer M. McFadden

The first lady of the United States encouraged high school students at Gen. H.H. Arnold High School in Wiesbaden, Germany to treasure their educations and learn from every experience Feb. 22, 2005.

"You will make mistakes." *Laura Bush, First Lady of the United States*

Mistakes make life interesting, while learning from your mistakes makes life memorable,"

Laura Bush, who is accompanying U.S. President George W. Bush during his series of meetings with European leaders, spoke to more than 400 students in the school's gymnasium.

"Wherever you go in life there are a few things I hope you remember," Mrs. Bush said. "One is to treasure your education. Remember it (education) is freedom and it never ends. Strive to learn everyday."

And, learn from every experience, she added.

"You will make mistakes. Mistakes make life interesting, while learning from your mis-

takes makes life memorable," the first lady said.

Mrs. Bush, who was introduced by Eric Goldman, the school's principal, was greeted by thunderous cheers and smiles in the after school presentation.

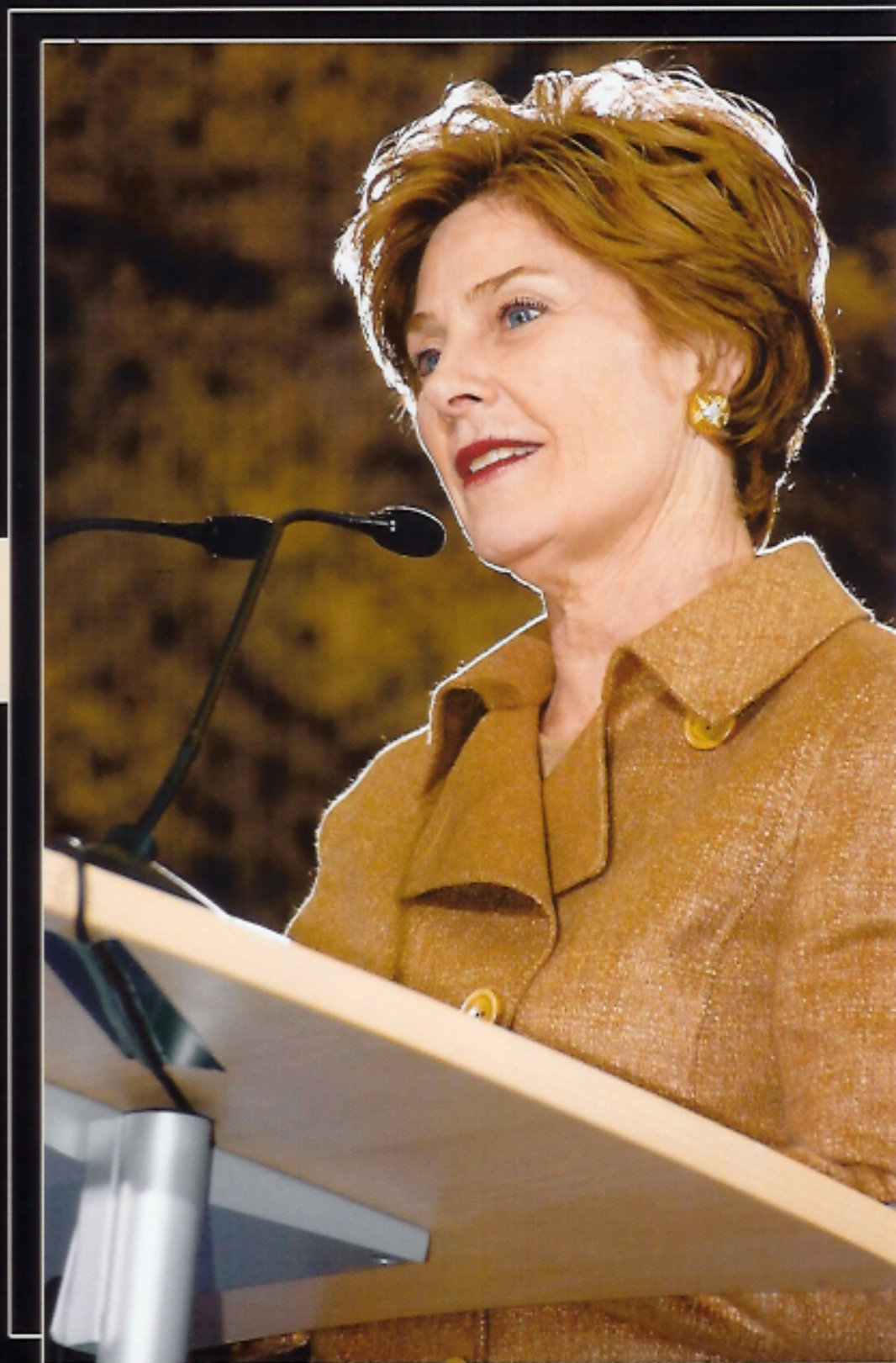
"She is an educator, so she knows the important value of what we do. It is an honor to have her here. It took many days and hours of planning but it was all for these students," said Shelia Smith, the vice principle of the high school.

Students filled the stage and bleachers to listening to the first lady's advice.

"Getting to see Ms. Bush was exciting. She is a motivation for me, especially as a strong female role model," said 18-year-old senior Norah Eloueslati.

After her speech Ms. Bush shook the student's hands and gave them an opportunity to pose with her for photos.

"It inspires the students that she took time out her busy schedule to spend time with them," said Smith. "Giving them the chance to shake her hand and get her photo is phenomenal."



Laura Bush, the first lady of the United States, discusses the importance of education to more than 400 students in the gymnasium at Gen. H. H. Arnold High School in Wiesbaden, Germany, Feb. 22.



Infantry Games 7th ATC brings



Iron Soldiers from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, conduct a search during the DISE training.

DISE to training table in Baumholder

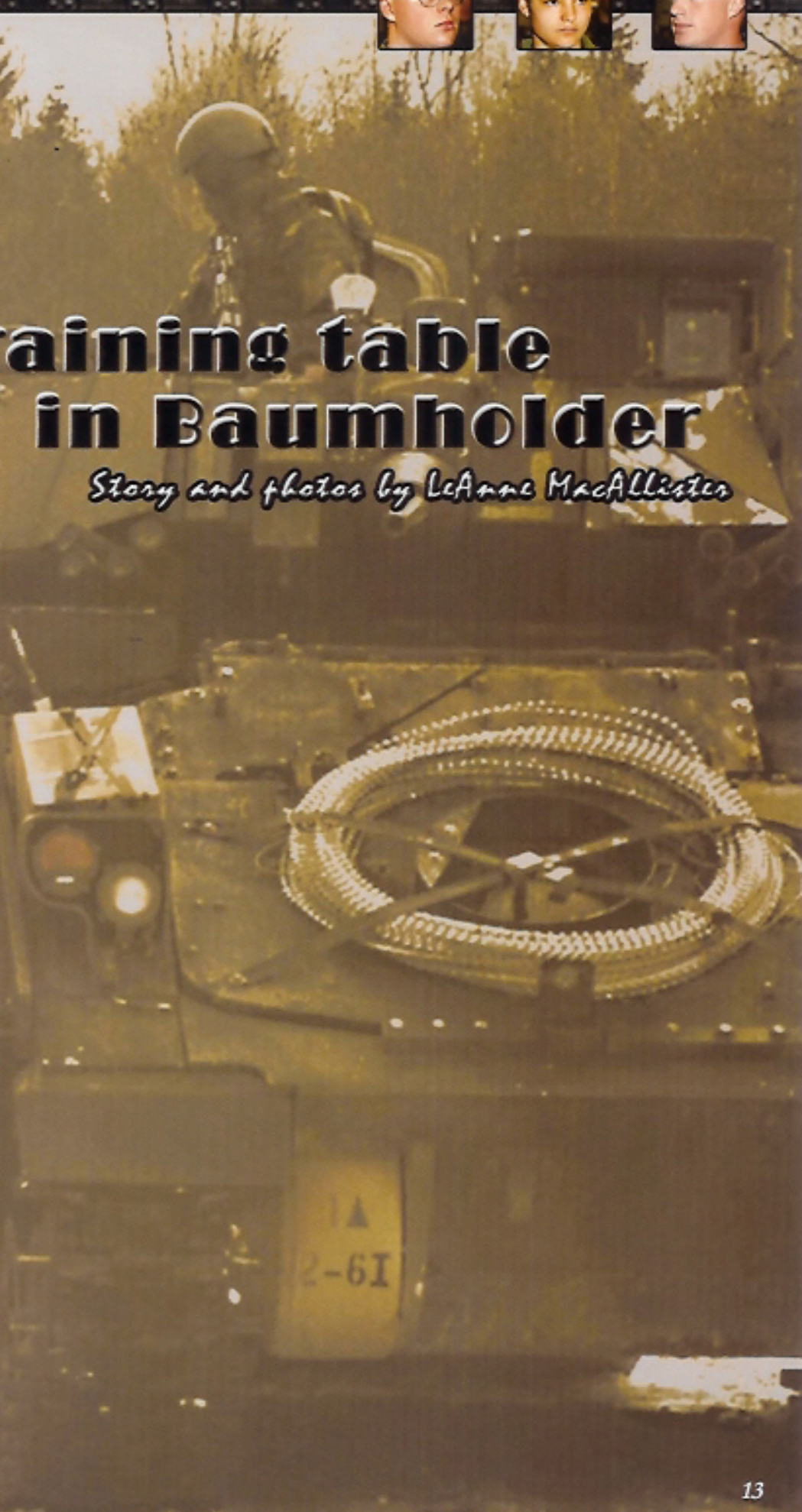
Story and photos by LeAnne MacAllister

Soldiers of Baumholder's two infantry battalions recently had Grafenwoehr's training brought to them. The Deployable Instrumentation Systems Europe — equipment in which Soldiers wear smart vests and helmets with GPS tracking systems and then review their practice raids and other operations digitally — provided platoons and companies a new alternative in realistic training at the Military Operations in Urban Terrain site.

Staff Sgt. Geoffrey Williams of the 7th Army Training Center travels with the equipment and provides DISE training to units across Europe.

"The DISE system is good for command and control. It allows commanders, through after action playback, to see the schemes and maneuvers in response to fire or contact drills and cordon searches. Basically it shows commanders what actually happened in stead of assessing what units think happened thanks to the play-back ability. You now know exactly who shot who."

On a recent visit, Williams implemented the equipment for A company, 2nd Infantry, 6th Battalion. In coordination with their training, Dale Franz, Local Training Area Supervisor, updated the MOUT site to more accurately depict an Iraqi town. Abandoned





Company A, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment Soldiers raid an insurgent's hideout at Baumholder's MOUT site.

Many of the 1st Armored Division Soldiers who are participating in the training were deployed to Iraq last year. The benefit of including realistic training with new Soldiers in their current platoons is extremely valuable in preparing the entire company for upcoming deployments.

"This system will show a unit that it's either effective or lagging in any basic maneuver drill," said Randy Blackwell, Training Aids and Devices Officer. "Units can go back after the

training and see what they need to fix for next time, be it another training exercise or the real thing."

Williams and Blackwell believe that this training is a valuable tool for any type of unit. The Army is backing up their belief. "In June we will be getting an instrumentation kit to include artillery in the training simulation," said Williams.

With systems like DISE brought to their doorstep, small units can experience training similar to large scale op-

erations held at the Combat Maneuver Training Center. Yet Williams explains, "We weren't designed to be something better than CMTC. We're designed to bring a similar sort of training to the more specific, company sized unit, no matter what branch of the Army, and better prepare them for missions ahead."

"Units can go back after the training and see what they need to fix for next time, be it another training exercise or the real thing."

Randy Blackwell,
7th ATC Training Aids and Devices Officer

cars were parked in roads and buildings were designated with Arabic signs to create a realistic situation.

Platoons carried out day and night missions with the equipment. With the command able to trace their every move through satellite imaging, platoons had to enter the MOUT site, seal off the area and hunt down insurgents.

If a Soldier was shot in the training process, the smart vest would be able to assess the severity of the wound. If injuries were life threatening, the vest would

send a signal to the Soldier's weapon and he would no longer be able to fire.

"This makes for more realistic training," said Williams. "If a Soldier really goes down, he can't continue to chase after the enemy and fight at full ability." DISE is a smart system — if another Soldier picks up the weapon of a fallen comrade, the signal will be able to transmit the change and the weapon will be able to fire again.

After seeing its capabilities in another unit's training exercise, Cpt. Chris-



Staff Sgt. Geoffrey Williams tracks Soldiers through satellite images during the DISE training program in Baumholder.

topher Hormann, 2nd Infantry 6th Battalion, Alpha Company Commander, requested the use of the DISE system to better prepare his Soldiers. "The DISE is an excellent training tool. It provides a company with the same capabilities of individual tracking as a CTC (combat training center). This type of individual tracking provides a valuable asset for company commanders and platoon leaders to see how well they visualize the battlefield, based upon reporting."

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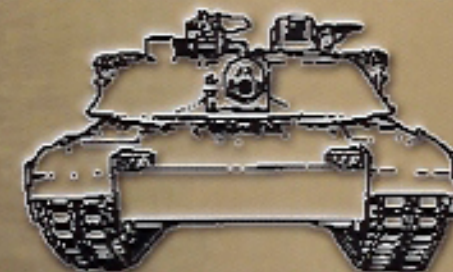
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1st Armored Division Support Troops Sling Load

123rd MSB and 2-501st AVN team up in aerial transport training

Story and photos by Pfc. Jennifer McFadden

Spinning rotors materialized over the tree tops. Through the cloud of dust and debris each blade sliced the cold winter air effortlessly like a warm knife through butter. Whipping winds flattened the grass as the AH-64 Black Hawk helicopter maneuvered over the Humvee like a

bird stalking its prey.

Locking suspension wires from the Humvee to the Black Hawk, Iron port missions.

"We are certifying our personnel to ensure that they know the proper procedures and are capable of performing all required tasks for a sling load operations," said Capt. Anthony Wagner, 123rd MSB's A Co. commander.

Breaking down into teams of three, 25 Soldiers and the company commander performed tasks of rigging a Humvee and a net of cargo.

"The requirements for certifying a load is that it has to be rigged according to the proper regulation

and inspected by someone who is either Pathfinder, Air-Assault, or Sling Load Inspector Certified," explained Wagner.

Although this was only a one-day event, training for the operation started in the classroom. Soldiers spent the week prior to the hands-on exercise reviewing every

detail of the upcoming mission's requirements.

"We are implementing crawl, walk, run training by starting in the classroom and ending up out here with the live sling load," said Staff Sgt. Jeffery Rollins, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the sling load exercise.

In the Field Apache Company Soldiers their eagerness and motivation when completing this training, which took them from the office environment to a real-world situation.

"This was my first experience with a Black Hawk and I was excited to get out into the field and show what we have learned in training," said Spc.

Lakeya Smith, a Company A Soldier.

The sling load exercise was more than a training event it also served as a bridge between the unit and the local German community. German community officials were enthusiastic to witness first hand the skills of their military neighbors.

"Although I have a busy sched-

"The requirements for certifying a load is that it has to be rigged according to the proper regulation and inspected by someone who is either Pathfinder, Air-Assault, or Sling Load Inspector Certified."

Capt. Anthony Wagner



Signaling a strong path of training Sgt. Manuel Fandino assists Sgt. Jason Williams, both from Company A, 123rd Main Support Battalion, in guiding the AH-64 Black Hawk to the right spot in a sling load training exercise outside Anderson Barracks, Dexheim, Germany, Feb. 17.

training

ule I was excited to come out and see this type of training exercise," said Klaus Penzer, Dexheim's Buergermeister (Mayor). "Usually the events that I am able to attend are in an official capacity."

"It was a great opportunity because I have never seen a live training event such as this. Now I can convey to other German officials what the military does here, which increases understanding and strengthens the partnership between the German and military communities," Penzer said.

Still pumped from the experience, the 123rd Soldiers watched the Black Hawk disappear out of sight as the morning came to an end.

The training and practical experience to which these Soldiers were exposed will help prepare them to react when they are called on by the 1st Armored Division.

"Having the bird come and participate gives each of these Soldiers a chance to experience what a sling load mission would be like down range and is a great training tool," said Rollins referring to the Black Hawk support from the Iron Knights.



Flight crews from the 2nd Battalion, 501st Aviation Regiment, teamed up with the Company A, 123rd Main Support Battalion, in a live sling load exercise outside Anderson Barracks, Dexheim, Germany. The Iron Knights assisted the Apache Soldiers in aerial transport training Feb. 17.



Blackhawk Squadron thunderthrough Grafenwoehr

Soldiers of 1/1 CAV define gunnery rotations for 1st Armored Division

Grafenwoehr Training Area was reflagged "CAV Country" Jan. 15 - Feb. 16, when 1st Armored Division's 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment, conducted its biannual tank and Bradley gunnery and annual Combat Maneuver Training Center Live-Fire Exercise.

Spearheading the division back into gunnery, the Blackhawks' field rotation served a dual purpose.

Primarily, the intent was to train M1A1 Abrams tank and Bradley Armored Fighting Vehicle crews individually and by platoon. This was done through gunnery tables VIII and XII, the only two tables - levels of training - some might say, that matter.

... Continued page 22 ...



Story and photo by Sgt. Christopher Stanis



"This is where we test our proficiency in our vehicles," said Staff Sgt. Armando Mendoza, a Bradley commander in Comanche Troop 1/1 CAV, adding that the other tables "are just practice."

The second benefit coming from the rotation is "providing information for division on what we've learned," said Lt. Col. John Peeler, 1/1 CAV commander.

"We set the standard for what gunnery needs to look like," the squadron commander continued.

A gunnery rotation lasts about 30 day.

Table VIII qualification is based on 10 target engagements – six daytime and four nighttime scenarios.

"A crew has to complete seven Ts or Ps (Trained and Needs Practice), hit one (nuclear, biological and chemical) engagement and two nighttime engagements to qualify," said Mendoza.

The other tables include firing various combinations of the vehicles' weaponry. The M1A1's arsenal includes two M240 7.62 mm machine guns – one that is coaxial (COAX) and one that is mounted on the loader's hatch but also capable for dismounted operations – a .50 caliber machine gun and the 120 mm main gun. The Bradley packs a M240 COAX machine gun, two anti-armor TOE missiles and the 25 mm main gun.

An extra incentive for the Iron Cavalrymen to excel on Table VIII is the "Top Gun" designation. This goes to the tank and Bradley crew that shoots best during Table VIII.

"This is decided by who has the most Ts," explained Sgt. Donald Smith, a Bradley gunner with Comanche Troop. "If more than one gun has the same number of Ts they go by kill times (how quickly a crew knocks down a target.)"

The squadron commander cap-

tured the honors in the Bradley, with his gunner, Sgt. Bryan Laessle, and driver, Spc. William Steaman.

Apache Troop's tank A-22 also entered the winners' circle with Staff Sgt. Michael Bonesteel at the helm as tank commander. His crew included Pvt. Joseph McCoy, driver, Spc. Jonathan Owens, gunner, and Pvt. Brian Moore, loader.

The skillful crews will hold this title until the next gunnery rotation.

After crews qualify at Table VIII they continue through gunnery, eventually reaching Table XII. This is a platoon-sized event. Four Bradleys or four tanks move together through a series of engagements as a fighting team.

"This is the first collective table in the (gunnery) qualification series," said Capt. Stephen Banks, commander of 1/1 CAV's Bandit Troop.

Table XII requires teamwork and cross talk between vehicle crews to be successful.

"Up until this point training has been done by the individual crew," said Sgt. Ernesto Ortiz, a Bandit Troop tank gunner. "Now we have to make sure to shoot our specific enemies and not our wingman's. Everyone is anxious to make the kill, but we have to hold back a little."

Additionally, individual training tables gave control to the tank commander. Table XII shifted that control.

"Table XII gives platoon leaders the opportunity to command and control their platoons," said Banks.

Table XII, like the other levels of gunnery, consists of day and night engagements. Each platoon fires at roughly 50 hard targets, representing structures and vehicles, and 20 troop targets from stationary and moving positions in various conditions including an NBC simulation.

"Each tank (and Bradley) is supplied with an adequate amount of ammo for all the weapons," said Staff Sgt. Patrick Chaplin, a Bandit Troop tank commander.

Following gunnery, 1/1 CAV transitioned in to the CMTC Live Fire – the "hot" portion of the field rotation otherwise held in Hohenfels, Germany.

"The live fire is the culminating event in Grafenwoehr," said Peeler. This time the entire troop – two tank platoons and two Bradley platoons, with field artillery support – is tested on its combat prowess.

At CMTC in Hohenfels, Soldiers and vehicles are equipped with the multiple integrated laser engagement system, or MILLES gear. Combat is simulated with lasers instead of live ammunition.

The Blackhawk squadron won't go to Hohenfels until May, but as Peeler explained, CMTC tries to provide units a live fire once a year and a Hohenfels rotation every 18 months.

The live fire range presented scenarios of open-ground warfare and urban combat.

"It was a mix between major combat and the threat base we might see somewhere like Iraq," said Peeler. "The Soldiers got to see low to high intensity (combat) all in the same day."

Though it was their first time on the range since returning from Iraq, the Blackhawks of 1/1 CAV seemed at ease to jump back in to the saddles of these iron steeds.

"The squadron has done an outstanding job getting into the Grafenwoehr training environment," Peeler said.

This success shined through, despite 90 percent of the squadron being brand new, according to Blackhawk



Grinning and giving a "Thumbs Up" from the turret of an M1A1 Abrams tank, Apache Troop, 1/1 CAV tankers roll toward their first engagement on Tank Table XII in Grafenwoehr, Germany.

Command Sgt. Maj. David Davenport.

The range observer-controllers were a big aid in the newbies doing the best they could.

"They identified weaknesses and we tried to correct the deficiencies," Davenport said.

In the end, the Soldiers of 1/1 CAV were trained and prepared for war, the command sergeant major said.

"They know what right looks like," said Davenport.

Even for the cavalry, the road

to success couldn't be walked alone.

Units that supported 1/1 CAV while in Grafenwoehr included element of 55th Personnel Services Battalion, 127th Aviation Support Battalion, 123rd Main Support Battalion, 501st Military Police Company, Grafenwoehr's base support battalion and C Battery, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery Regiment.

"They all came together as part of the Blackhawk team to make the

event successful," said Davenport.

With ten years of tanking under his belt, Chaplin said the most important thing to come from a gunnery exercise knows his crew is a lethal force.

Said "Knowing you could be called upon to go anywhere and you can count on the men next to you to complete the mission and make it home safely," the seasoned tanker said "That's what makes me come away happiest."



...going ballistic when crews qualify

Master Gunners target success

Story and photo by Sgt. Christopher Stanis



Spc. Julia Valle, a tank gunner with 1st Armored Division's Bandit Troop, 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment, bore sites a M1A1 Abrams Tank during the Tank Table XII portion of 1/1 CAV's bi-annual gunnery rotation in Grafenwoehr, Germany.

Master gunners are the experts for two of the Army's premier heavy combat weapons systems of today – the Abrams Main Battle Tank and Bradley Armored Fighting Vehicle.

A master gunner needs to know everything about his machine and its arsenal, according to Sgt. 1st Class Charles Elam, a M1A1 Tank master gunner for 1st Armored Division's 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment.

ners are responsible for executing it."

Master gunners train crews on their vehicle's capabilities, especially if the Soldiers are new and have never been through gunnery.

"That's what it's all about," said Elam, "watching a crew go from being brand new to qualifying the first time. Knowing you twisted and molded them to get to that point, nothing else matters to me."

Elam said master gunners are technical advisors on the training field, but they are also an integral part of the battle field.

"They advise the commander

A master gunner is an asset Army wide, but where he really earns his paycheck is tank and Bradley gunnery, the annual field exercise where Soldiers qualify Bradley and tank weapons systems.

"This is the master gunner's world," said Elam. "The commander is responsible for what happens at gunnery, but the master gun-

ner on what the vehicles are capable of doing and what the enemy's capabilities are against you," Elam continued.

With a responsibility like that, Elam said being a master gunner "is a zero defect job."

While almost every school in the Army requires a 70 percent grade point average to pass, students at the Master Gunner course must maintain a 90 percent proficiency, Elam went on to explain.

Generally, there are two types of master gunners, according to Elam, a master gunner since 1998. Bradley master gunners are usually infantrymen or cavalrymen and their training takes place at Fort Benning, Ga. Tank master gunners attend courses at Fort Knox, Ky.

The three-month courses train Soldiers on a variety of subjects such as creating gunnery plans, training crews and the capabilities of the vehicles.

To enroll in the course, Soldiers must be at least staff sergeant and prove they have knowledge of the tank or Bradley, said Elam.

"The school is a lot of grueling exams," he said. "It's a great job, but you have to have the heart to want it."





Gunnery is for every Soldier

Gunnery is traditionally the time of year when tank and Bradley armored fighting vehicle crews qualify their "rides", proving they are combat ready.

But 1st Armored Division's 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment, had something new in store for its recent mission in Grafenwoehr, Germany.

Adhering to the Army's philosophy of "Every Soldier is a rifleman," the Blackhawks introduced Iron Warrior Tables to their gunnery rotation.

"We're mirroring tank and Bradley gunnery, but for the individual Soldier," said 1st Sgt. Zaifuddin Graves, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop first sergeant.

Iron Warrior Tables focus on

small arms and crew-served weapons training for "low-density" military occupational specialties, such as combat service support like mechanics, medics and cooks.

"No area is off limits from attacks," said 1/1 CAV Command Sgt. Maj. David Davenport. "The Soldiers running the (logistics convoys) can't rely on combat arms Soldiers to always be around; they need to be able to defend themselves."

CSS Soldiers conducted their basic individual weapon qualifications on the M16A2 rifle, M4 Carbine and 9mm pistol.

... Continued next page ...

Iron Warrior Tables provide support troops

TRIGGER TIME

Story and photos by Sgt. Christopher Stanis



They then moved on to basic dismounted and mounted crew-served weapons training.

These Iron Warrior Tables gave Soldiers like Spc. Hampton Mack their first opportunity to fire crew-served weapons.

"It's not like normal training and we're not stuck in the office," the 113

Armored Personnel Carrier mechanic said. "This was a great opportunity and I'm enjoying it."

Future field rotations will include tables such as reactive firing,

Tables are giving Soldiers a better chance of survival in combat environments.

"If we make sure we're qualified on our weapons, when we go to (combat) we'll know how to fire them," said Sgt. Mitchell Lyons, a Bradley Armored Fighting Vehicle mechanic.

"When the time comes, we won't go and get killed because of lack of training."

"No area is off limits from attacks."

Sgt. Maj. David Davenport

firing with both hands and firing from a moving convoy, according to

we won't go and get killed because of lack of training."



A Soldier from 1st Armored Division's Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment, fires a .50 caliber machine gun during the squadron's Iron Warrior Tables in Grafenwoehr, Germany. The tables were run in conjunction with 1/1 CAV's biannual tank and Bradley gunnery.

Soldiers

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Front line success is built on solid logistics

Shooting the "big guns" has always been the focus of a gunnery rotation, but 1st Armored Division's 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment, knows it takes more than the squeeze of a trigger to get a bullet down range.

"You can't move a tank if (the fuel) is empty, you need round of ammunition to fire weapons and Soldiers like to be fed," said 1/1 CAV's top enlisted Soldier, Command Sgt. Maj. David Davenport.



Sgt. Aaron Richards, a mechanic with 1st Armored Division's Comanche Troop, 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment, works on a Bradley Armored Fighting Vehicle at the Bradley Table XII range during 1/1 CAV's gunnery rotation in Grafenwoehr, Germany.

But some times mandatory ingredients in a recipe for achievement are forgotten.

"If the food is bad (at the dining facility) everybody knows about it; but if the food is good, the cooks don't hear a thing," said 1st Sgt. Graves, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop first sergeant.

However, Graves continued, "everyone has a piece of the pie to make operations successful."

From the cooks to the mechanics, medics, fuelers or ammo handlers, everyone is adding a little extra filling to their slices.

The squadron's dining facility, for instance, conducted 24-hour operations.

"We leave out soup and coffee for any Soldier who wants to come in at night and get something hot to eat or drink," said Pfc. Terry Johnson, a 127th Aviation Support Battalion food service specialist who was attached to

... Continued next page ...

Story and photos by Sgt. Christopher Stanis



1/1 CAV for the gunnery rotation.

Johnson said the extra touches do a lot for Soldiers' morale because the dining facility gives them a place to "gather and unwind" while grabbing a snack, watching TV or playing cards.

Throughout the field exercise, the cavalry cooks served meals to 950 Soldiers.

"A lot of times it was hard work and long hours, but we were doing our job to make sure 1/1 CAV eats," said Spc. Gregory Cason, a cook

with HHT. "We go above and beyond the standard to put out quality meals."

The commitment to the mission went far beyond chow time.

The squadron petroleum supply specialists pumped more than 100,000 gallons of fuel. The handlers at the ammunition holding area distributed nearly 500,000 rounds—everything from 5.56 mm to hand grenades and claymore mines for individual Soldiers, to 25 mm and 120 mm for the main

guns of the Bradley Armored Fighting Vehicle and M1A1 Abrams tank was used during the exercise.

Continuing the circle of support, mechanics are needed to move the fuel and ammo.

"If people are trying to get a mission done we make the mission happen," said Spc. James Avent, a mechanic with 1/1 CAV. "If they go out there and secure the world ... they need to be able to roll. Maintenance means



Soldiers of 1st Armored Division's 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment, line up for chow at the Blackhawks' dining facility during their biannual tank and Bradley gunnery in Grafenwoehr, Germany.



Sgt. 1st Class Richard Hoke (left), medic platoon sergeant, and Capt. Eric Klage, a physician's assistant, examine the leg of Pvt. Dustin Johnson. All three are with 1st Armored Division's 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment. Johnson slipped on ice and fractured his ankle while in Grafenwoehr, Germany, for 1/1 CAV's biannual tank and Bradley gunnery.

movement."

Even, and perhaps especially, the medics play a critical roll in a field exercise. A range can't event go "wet", or open for live fire, without a medic on site.

"We provide immediate attention if someone gets injured on the range," said Spc. Ryan Willingham, a 1/1 CAV medic.

Willingham said if the injury is minor, the Soldier can wait on the range until it is cleared; otherwise he can taken off the range immediately, or a 9-line

medical evacuation request can be called in for serious injuries.

"A lot of times it was hard work and long hours, but we were doing our job to make sure 1-1 CAV eats."

Spc. Gregory Cason

Over the course of gunnery, the squadron's medics treated more than 400 patients. With the services provided

by the combat service support Soldiers (CSS), it's no wonder a field exercise can't happen without them.

"The CSS elements have done an excellent job supporting this gunnery rotation," said Lt. Col. John Peeler, 1-1 CAV commander. "We can't do this without them."

Support Soldiers

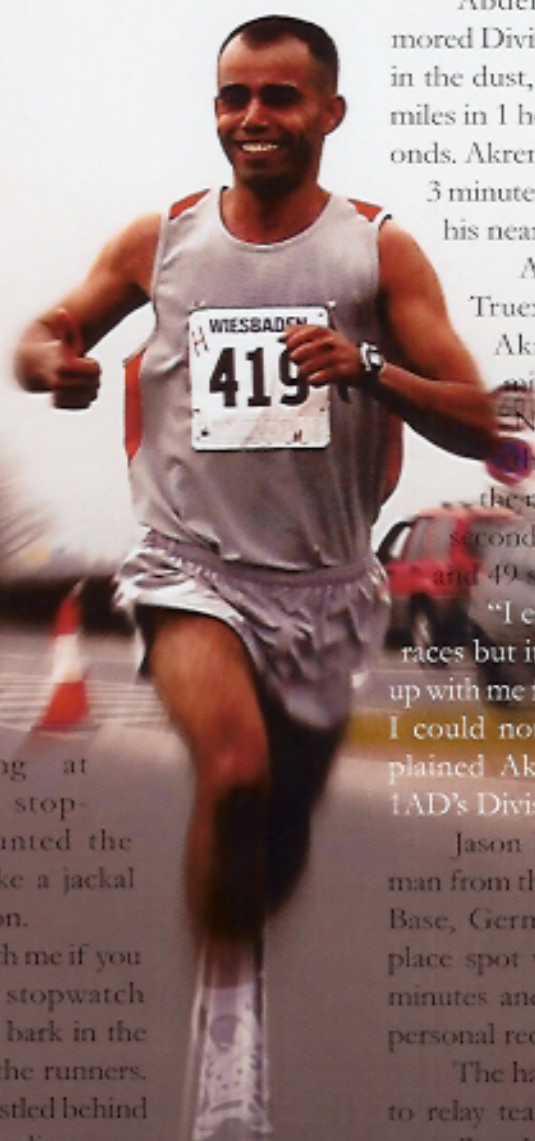


MWR March Madness Half Marathon

Abdelmalek showcases speed

Story and photos by Pfc. Jennifer M. McFadden

Abdelmalek Akremi



Abdelmalek Akremi, a 1st Armored Division Soldier, left opponents in the dust, streaking through the 13.1 miles in 1 hour, 14 minutes and 34 seconds. Akremi came to a screeching halt 3 minutes and 15 seconds faster than his nearest rival.

Another Iron Soldier, Jacob Truex, kept a steady pace with Akremi through the first 5 miles but began to trail behind. Nipping at Akremi's heels throughout the remainder of the race, Truex managed to seize second place in 1 hour, 17 minutes and 49 seconds.

"I enjoy running these types of races but it can get lonely. Truex kept up with me for a while but unfortunately I could not keep him with me," explained Akremi, who is assigned to 1AD's Division Support Command.

Jason Bren, a security forces airman from the 786 SFS-S3, Sembach Air Base, Germany, closed out the third place spot with a time of 1 hour, 19 minutes and 26 seconds, crushing his personal record by 12 minutes.

The half marathon was also open to relay teams. Two all-female teams, one all-male team and six coed teams competed.

The fastest team, running the in race 1 hour 30 minutes, included Sgt. Meagan Stewart, a 12th Chemical Company Soldier, Sgt. Cedric Bowie from the 19th Support Center, Pfc. Keith Rasi and Pfc. Martin Hawk, Soldiers assigned to 501st Military Police.

The Tony Bass Fitness Center served as the start and finish point with a route that encompassed many areas of the post and the community surrounding the air field.

Charging out the front gate the runners had completed a little more than 2 kilometers with Akremi leading the way. Leading the pack from the outset he was virtually unmatched throughout.

Volunteers were stationed at the 13-kilometer point on the route to provide water, Gatorade and moral support.

"This is the first time I have volunteered for this type of function but it is a lot of fun," said Patty Brackin, whose husband is a 1st Armored Division Soldier race participant. "It (volunteering) really gets me involved with my husband's passion of running," she added.

Runners were both enlisted and commissioned and the ages ranged from 17 to over 50 making participation in the event very diverse.

501st MI Battalion commander Lt. Col Laurence Mixson finished second in his age group setting an example to his subordinates what a Soldier can achieve with daily physical fitness training.

"PT (physical fitness) is really the only training I've done for this event. I stress to my Soldiers how important it is to run or participate in a cardiovascular exercise at least three times a week for at least 30 minute intervals," said Mixson.



Left: Spc. John Gerschefski, a Soldier with the 501st Military Intelligence Battalion and his wife Sarah, run at a steady pace together in the MWR sponsored March Madness race held on 18 March. Below: Lt. Col. Lawrence Mixson, the 501st MI Battalion commander chugs like a steam locomotive toward the finish line.



"This just proves PT works," he added.

Akremi, a Discom Soldier, trains on a daily basis and has competed in numerous army and civilian races.

"There was a little bit of wind but overall I felt good about the race," said Akremi. "Everyone who came out did great, especially Truex, who kept with me for the first quarter of the route. I am excited to be competing and look forward to the full marathon in May and I would like to make the All Army Cross Country Team," he said.

Akremi ran the Army 10 Miler in Oct. 2004, completing it in 54 minutes and 60 seconds. He placed first in Europe, 26th overall and 7th in the Division.

"I am really going to strive to run the 10 miler in under 50 minutes this year. It is just about pushing yourself," said Akremi.

He has an ultimate goal of running for the All Army Cross Country Team.

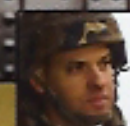
Some of the same Soldiers and airmen will also be competing in a full marathon being held in Mainz, Germany, in May.

Service and family members stationed in the German community participated in the MWR sponsored half marathon, taking a route through the Wiesbaden Army Airfield and the surrounding community.



Service and family members check their watches and listen for the word to charge into the MWR-sponsored March Madness half marathon.

Iron runners compete in local foot race



Tankin' Bandits ride through Hessen, Germany outside "the box"

Armor crews adapt to the rigors of low-intensity conflict

Story and photos by Sgt. Gregory F. Withrow



Above: Spattered with mud, Staff Sgt. Simala Wright warns other Bandits of 1-37 Armor to get out of the simulated IED-laden building during MOUT training.

Right: Responding to Simala's instructions, a Soldier slings another, who has sustained a simulated injury, over his shoulder and runs out of the structure



Urban Terrain

Inching slowly forward through the wood line, the "Axemen" of Company A, prepare to rush a building. A few of the Soldiers remain hidden in the prone position, providing cover for their comrades who burst from the relative safety of cover and rush to the backside of a cinder-block structure.

Shots ring out and Bandits flatten themselves against the muddy earth or the cold stone walls of the structure. Their steamy breath clouds the chilled air as the Soldiers gather their wits, preparing to enter the building's only doorway.

Supporting fire erupts from the wood line, suppressing the waiting enemy. The Bandits make their move and assault the entrance.

Again and again, this scene repeats itself as Bandits hone skills traditionally the specialty of infantrymen or combat engineers.

"This training is really intense and . . . Continued next page . . .

The rattle and pop of small-arms and machine gun fire shatter the crisp silence of the frosty-February air in the foothills of the Taunus Mountains of Hessen, Germany. Along the former Roman frontier, modern mounted warriors of the 1st Battalion, 37th Armored Regiment, train, adapting the lessons learned from combat in the sands of another former Roman frontier — Iraq.

Leaving their trusty steel steeds behind under evergreen cover in the

forests of Friedberg Training Area, the Bandits of 1-37 Armor dismount their M1A1 Abrams tanks —assaulting the enemy on foot.

"Dismounted operations is something new for tankers," said 1st Lt. Jonathan Villasenor, executive officer, Company A, 1-37 AR. Making use of Military Operations in Urban Terrain facilities in FTA, the Bandits are practicing techniques for entering and searching structures in a hostile environment.

Iron Soldiers of Co. A, 1-37 Armor, cover all the angles as they prepare to advance during MOUT training. Backing up his men and observing their training is a platoon sergeant from Co. A.



A column of steel snakes through the German countryside escorted by German military police. Cooperation between American and Germany militaries enables maneuver exercises such as this one.

fast," said Pfc. Ellery Majalca, a Bandit M1A1 driver. "They should really implement this at OSUT."

OSUT, or One Station Unit Training, is a combination of Basic and Advanced Individual Training that tankers receive at Fort Knox, Ky. Infantry Soldiers also receive OSUT training at Fort Benning, Ga., but there is a different focus for those initial-entry infantry Soldiers – a focus that many tankers have adopted after their experiences in Iraq.

Fundamental Skills

"It's not tanker stuff but it's fundamental," emphasized Lt. Col. Garry Bishop, Bandit commander and combat veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Other members of the Bandit team watch over their comrades from the tur-



Medics of the 501st Forward Support Battalion and 1-37 Armor combine forces to treat mock wounds sustained in an improvised explosive device attack exercise. The simulated attack on the convoy was designed to replicate conditions which may be faced in Iraq.



Four of a kind, all 8-years-old and excited by the rumbling of 72-ton M1A1 Abrams tanks through their hometown of Esch, Germany. Lenard Floeren, Jannik Dannewitz, Robin Abel and Felix Ziegeldorf stand in awe as Co. A, 1-37 Armor, winds through the small villages in the Taunus Mountains. "I have never seen a tank before," exclaimed Floeren.

rets of their 72-ton rolling fortresses, which have crept to the outskirts of the mock village. Although the Bandits are going in on foot, they aren't without an intimidating big brother as backup.

"Shock effect, that's what it is,"

explained Bishop to his troops during an after-action review designed to highlight the positives of a particular exercise and examine what could have been done better. "Tanks surrounding a building leveling their 120 mm guns on them gives the enemy pause to decide if they really want to fight or not."

Integrating and adapting every piece of equipment the Bandit Battalion has at its disposal is a key focus of this type of training.

"You have the 240B dismount kits," said Bishop. "Use them."

The 7.62 mm 240B machine gun mounted on top the Abrams' at the loaders hatch can be quickly dismounted and adapted to an infantry-style weapon capable of providing rapid suppressive fire in support of troops moving from building to building.

"Don't think this is infantry stuff and you don't have to learn it, because you do," said Bishop pointedly to his Soldiers.

Even as the Bandits prepare for the possibilities of low-intensity or

han combat they remain focused on the high-intensity spectrum for which tanks are designed.

Mounting up and rolling out from FTA, the Bandits and their supporting elements from Co. B, 16th Engineer Battalion, 501st Forward Support Battalion and members of the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery Regiment, convoyed about 40 kilometers tactically over the Taunus Mountains to the outskirts of a small German village of Wuerges.

Most maneuver training in Europe takes place at the Combat Maneuver Training Center in Hohenfels, Germany, but this sort of exercise has a different flavor than the force-on-force simulations held inside "The Box" of CMTC.

In Wuerges, the maneuver culminated in a breach exercise designed to test Bandits' abilities surmounting high-intensity-conflict obstacles. But along the way, tactically navigating the small streets of

... Continued next page ...



Sgt. Nicole Kudrass is a Feldjaeger with the Bundeswehr, which translates to English as a military police person with the German army.

Training such as 1-37 Armor's maneuver exercise through the German countryside requires coordination with local, national and military officials. Soldiers like Kudrass act as an interface between maneuvering Americans and local German communities, understanding the mission of the Americans as well as the need to minimize inconvenience to locals.

Kudrass thinks there is value in working together with the U.S. Army during such exercises.

"I like to work with American's but we do not get the chance to do this enough," said Kudrass. "I think there is value in this interaction."

Kudrass is stationed in Mainz with the 2. Feldjaegerbataillon 251, or the equivalent of an American military police battalion. Her unit was also involved in providing security in the Wiesbaden/Mainz area during President George W. Bush's meeting with German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and subsequent visit with American troops gathered at Wiesbaden Army Airfield on Feb. 22.



Rapidly navigating strands of concertina wire, an M1A1 Abrams from 1-37 Armor races through a breach opened by Co. B, 16th Engineer Battalion.



German villages provided challenges similar to those faced in Iraq.

Maneuvering outside "The Box" provides a realistic challenge of command and control over long distances, according to Cpt. Joseph Albrecht, commander of Company A's Axemen. Along with realistic movement comes the element of surprise as the Bandits lead tank was struck by a simulated Improvised Explosive Device, better known to OIF veterans as an IED.



Fundamental Skills

This type of training is now standard for Army units because no one is immune to an IED. Reacting to an ambush of this type provides an opportunity for everyone in the unit to train for various contingencies in combat because the entire unit and its supporting elements are moving as a whole. Training everyone on his M113 Armored Personnel Carrier in the different positions is the primary focus of combat medic Staff Sgt. Gustavo Hernandez, another combat veteran of OIF.

"Everyone on the track needs to be able to fill in and do everyone's job," explained Hernandez. Drawing on his combat-experiences Hernandez believes in providing his Soldiers the most realistic training.

"It was kind of like a rush back to a combat experience," said Hernandez. "When we received the message, it sounded like the real thing." Imparting this sense of urgency to his Soldiers, Hernandez believes, is the way to train.

"Take everything for real," Hernandez emphasizes. "When it happens for real you already get everything set up and got your mind set up on what you are going to do. That's the way I want my guys to train."

Above: Platoon leader 1st Lt. Brett Brenkus radios to the rest of his platoon as they prepare to roll out for training in Friedberg Training Area located in the foothills of the Taunus Mountains in the German state of Hessen. Right: Pvt. Sam Kennedy and Sgt. 1st Class William Thompson prepare to roll out with the rest of Company A's 1st Platoon during 1st Battalion, 37th Armored Regiment's training in the Friedberg Training Area. Thompson (left) is a tank commander and platoon sergeant for his platoon.

